

# NEWS

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*for immediate release*

## **JUSTICE COURTS**

### **MARICOPA COUNTY**

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June 20, 2001

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## **Maricopa County Justice Courts Elect New Presiding Judge**

PHOENIX – The Maricopa County Justice Courts have elected Lester N. Pearce as the new Presiding Judge for 2001-2002. Judge Pearce will take office effective July 1, 2001. He replaces G. M. Osterfeld who has served as presiding judge since May 1999.

“During my tenure we have instituted many new and innovative programs, said G. M. Osterfeld, the presiding justice of the peace in Maricopa County. “I am confident that Judge Pearce will continue in this effort to improve the professionalism of the Maricopa County Justice Court system.”

Judge Pearce has served as the Justice of the Peace for the North Mesa precinct since 1997. Before joining the bench, he served in a variety of roles in both private business and state government. He served in the Arizona State Senate from 1989 to 1995 representing Legislative District 29 and was the assistant minority leader from 1991 to 1992.

While in the legislature, Judge Pearce served on the Judiciary Committee, the Commerce, Labor, Insurance and Banking Committee and the Rules Committee. He also was the chairman of the Government Committee from 1989-1991 and the vice-chairman of the Commerce, Labor, Insurance and Banking Committees and the Finance and Government Committees.

“I look forward to continuing the improvement of the justice courts in making them more accessible to the public as we keep moving toward community-based courts,” said Judge Lester Pearce.

Judge Pearce presided over small claims cases in Maricopa County Justice Courts for five years as a volunteer before joining the bench. Additionally, he was a member and vice-chairman of the Maricopa County Building Code Advisory Board and has served on a number of committees for the City of Mesa.

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He attended Brigham Young University and Mesa Community College where he studied accounting and pre-law. He also is a graduate of the Arizona Judicial College and a member of the National Judges Association.

“Judge Pearce brings to this position an extensive background and knowledge of the Arizona State Legislature and years of experience and knowledge of the Justice Courts,” said Bonnie Dicus, Maricopa County Justice Courts administrator. “I look forward to his leadership and contributions as the Justice Courts move to greater involvement in the community.”